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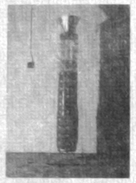

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# 10/20
## Symposium
## ON ARCHITECTURAL RESEARCH Part 2

**Saturday October 20, 1990**

**Panel #1** FORM, SPACE, MATERIAL, PERCEPTION **10:00 am**
James Carpenter, Dan Hoffman, Taeg Nishimoto, Wellington Reiter, Mark West, Allan Wexler

**Panel #2** TECHNOLOGY, HISTORY, CULTURE, CITY **1:30 pm**
Donna Goodman, Michael Kalil, Sheila Kennedy, Joan Ockman, Ken Saylor, Frano Violich

**Location:** Parsons School of Design, Dept. of Environmental Design
25 East 13th Street, Room #206, New York, NY.

**Admission:** $6 per panel, $10 for both panels.
Tickets will be available at the door. Reservations are advised due to limited seating. For reservation call STOREFRONT (212/431-5795) during gallery hours.

**Sponsor:** STOREFRONT FOR ART AND ARCHITECTURE in collaboration with the HARVARD ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW.

While the concept and the practice of research is integral and definitive in the fields of science and technology, research in architecture does not have any concrete identity except in building technology. The concepts of invention and innovation, which are vital for scientific advancements and technological production, are not clearly identified in architecture, even within its experimental and theoretical realms. While science relies on the presence of various anomalies within its existing models, which subsequently bring a crisis and the advancement of a field, exactly how architecture accomplishes its evolution and revolutions requires further exploration.

Changes in architecture are more or less identified with the concept of movement, where a new theory is raised with polemical announcement of new ideas and denouncement of old beliefs. Although architectural critics and theorists play a vital role in elucidating the transformation of architecture in the past tense, how new ideas are initiated and formed in the present and future tense within the actual process of architecture is what the second part of the symposium "On Architectural Research" is organized to explore.

The intent of this symposium is to measure the presence and importance of research within the field of architecture, and the following questions will be the basis of our discussions: What in architecture qualifies as research and what does not? Can research be independently identified and pursued within architecture at large, and, if so, what is its character, role, and function in architecture? Is research so integrated in the general system and process of architecture that an investigation of research is a study of architecture itself? Is research the experimental and the theoretical chapter in the evolution of architecture from ideas to manifestions, and is it responsible for the quality and the character of architecture in built form? Are there any differences between research and design, and, if so, what are they? Can there be research in aesthetics?

With the premise that architectural research is present in many places and phases of architectural activities, STOREFRONT has invited a very diverse group of panelists to create inclusive and flexible discussions on architectural research. This session will invite each panelist to make a statement about research, utilizing their own works to illustrate their ideas. Following the individual presentations, panelists and audience will pursue the many ideas, issues and questions surrounding architectural research. Keeping in mind that symposiums seldom reach any conclusive answers to their opening questions, with this symposium Storefront simply hopes to begin discussion on research in architecture, rather than to end it.

"On Architectural Research," a symposium to explore the presence and importance of research in architecture, is a collaboration of STOREFRONT FOR ART AND ARCHITECTURE with the HARVARD ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW. The first part of this symposium will take place on October 6th at the Piper Auditorium, Harvard University Graduate School of Design, Cambridge, Mass. This part of the symposium will focus on both theoretical and institutional issues related to the problem of how architecture may be conceived and practiced as a research discipline. Organized by the HARVARD ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW #9, it begins with opening remarks by Bill Hillier, followed with presentations by Lars Lerup, Hashim Sarkis, and John Whiteman. The first panel, "Theoretical and Epistemological Dimensions" will include Stanford Anderson, K. Michael Hays, Alberto Perez-Gomez, Denise Scott Brown, John Whiteman and moderator Donald Schon. The second panel, "Institutional Constraints in Academics and Practice," will include Henry Cobb, Alan Colquhoun, John Hejduk, Kyong Park, William Porter, Mack Scogin, Jorge Silvetti and moderator Peter Rowe.

The second part of the symposium is organized by STOREFRONT FOR ART AND ARCHITECTURE. Excerpts of the symposium will be published in the HARVARD ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW #9. For further information, contact STOREFRONT FOR ART AND ARCHITECTURE, 97 Kenmare Street, New York, NY. 10012

**PANELISTS:**

**James Carpenter** received a B.F.A. from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1972. He is currently teaching at the Royal College of Art in London, and has taught at the University of California, Berkeley and the Rhode Island School of Design. He is a sculptor whose primary works are glass structures within architectural contexts. He is currently collaborating with Norman Foster Associates on the Chiswick Park Project in London.

**Donna Goodman** received a B.A. from Smith College and a M.Arch. from Columbia University. She has taught at the Rhode Island School of Design, Parsons School of Design and the City College of New York.

**Dan Hoffman** graduated from Cooper Union in 1976 with a M.Arch. He has taught at the University of Detroit, Carleton University in Ottawa and University of Toronto. He is presently head of the architecture department at the Cranbrook Academy of Art.

**Michael Kalil** is an architect based in New York. He has worked with NASA on designs for long-term space habitations.

**Sheila Kennedy** received a B.A. from Wesleyan University in 1979, graduated from the Ecole Normale Superior des Beaux Art, Paris in 1980, and holds a M.Arch. from Harvard. She is currently an assistant professor at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design.

**Taeg Nishimoto** was awarded a Bachelor of Architecture in 1978 from Yaseda University, Japan and a M.Arch. from Cornell University in 1985. He is currently teaching at Pratt Institute and Columbia University. He is the principal of Nishimoto + Allied Architects.

**Joan Ockman** received a B.A. in Literature from Harvard, and a Bachelor of Architecture from Cooper Union. She is currently teaching architectural theory and history at Columbia University, and has been active in architectural publishing for many years.

**Kyong Park** received a B.S. from the University of Michigan in 1979, and has been Director of STOREFRONT for Art and Architecture since he founded it in1982. He is currently teaching at the Rhode Island School of Design, and has taught at City College of New York.

**Wellington Reiter** received a B.Arch. from Tulane University and a M.Arch. from Harvard in 1986. He is currently teaching at M.I.T. and Harvard, and has taught at the Rhode Island School of Design.

**Ken Saylor** studied at the Southern California Institute of Architecture and the Independent Program of the Whitney Museum of American Arts. The principal of Architecture/ Information, he has produced numerous exhibition designs and writes architectural criticism.

**Frano Violich** received a B. Arch. from the University of California at Berkeley in 1980 and a M.Arch. from Harvard in 1984. He is currently a visiting critic at the Rhode Island School of Design.

**Mark West** was awarded a B.Arch. from Cooper Union in 1980, and is currently teaching at the College of the Atlantic. He has taught at Carleton University in Ottawa and the University of Kentucky.

**Allan Wexler** received a B.Arch. from the Rhode Island School of Design and a M. Arch. from Pratt Institute. He has taught at the New Jersey Institute of Technology and is currently teaching at Parsons School of Design. His work is represented by the Ronald Feldman Gallery in New York, and he has had recent solo exhibitions at Brown University, the University of Massachusetts and the Ronald Feldman Gallery. He has an upcoming solo exhibition at the San Diego Museum of Contemporary Arts.

# ARCHITECTURE IN AN INVERTED FIELD

## RECENT WORK BY DAN HOFFMAN

**10/12**
**Discussion Program**
#53
Friday October 12, 6pm
TOPIC:HIGHER-ORDER DISCRIMINATION
MODERATOR: ADRIAN PIPER

**10/19 - 11/17**
**Exhibition**
ARCHITECTURE IN AN INVERTED FIELD
Recent Work By Dan Hoffman
October 19-November 17, 1990
GALLERY HOURS: Tuesday-Saturday, 12-6 pm
OPENING RECEPTION: Friday, October 19, 6-8 pm

**10/20**
**Symposium**
ON ARCHITECTURAL RESEARCH Part 2
Saturday October 20, 1990
At Parsons School of Design


97 Kenmare Street (near Lafayette) New York, NY 10012 212-431-5795
**STOREFRONT**
**for Art & Architecture**


## 10/19 - 11/17
### Exhibition

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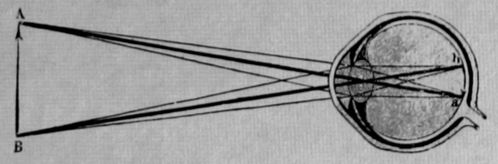



**Formation on the retina of the image *ab* of an object *AB*, in focus on the retina**

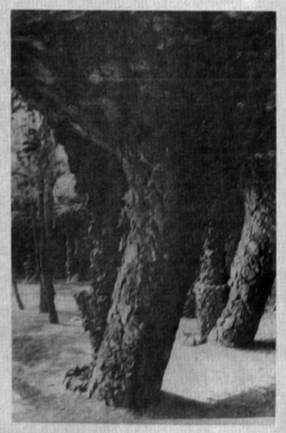
**VISION WITHOUT INVERSION**

In his work, "Phenomenology of Perception," Merleau-Ponty refers to an experiment by Stratton entitled "Vision Without Inversion" The experiment is based upon the phenomena of retinal inversion whereby the retina receives an inverted, visual image from the lens of the eye. This inverted image is per-ceived as being normal or right-side-up. For the experiment, the subject is given a pair of modified glasses designed to present the retina with an image that is right side up. The resulting image is then perceived by the subject as being upside down or inverted. During the course of the experiment the subject's impressions are recorded. Initially, what is seen by the subject does in fact appear to be upside down. But as the subject begins to engage in typical activities such as walking and sitting a moment is reached when vision is suddenly inverted again and all appears normal to the subject, despite the fact that the modified glasses are still being worn. Merleau-Ponty's explanation of the normal-ization of vision in this experiment is that sight, like any other perception, cannot be isolated from the context of the body and its world. When the subject engages in the typical, bodily acts, the presence of the feet on the ground as well as the myriad of other contacts with the world enables the body to compensate for the disturbed function. For being maintains itself as whole:

> "...I already live in the landscape, I see it accordingly as upright, the disturbance brought about by the experiment being concentrated in my own body, which thus becomes, not a mass of affective sensations, but a body which is needed to perceive a given spectacle. Everything throws us back on to organic relations between subject and space, to that gearing of subject onto his world which is the origin of space."

I remain fascinated by the simple (and cruel) logic of this demonstration. (The subject re-ports the experience of 'visual vertigo' during the experiment.) The simple observation that vision is in fact received upside down in the eye remains a mystery to me. How is it that an inverted image on the eye can translate into the landscape that we see and understand? Is there not a residue of this inverted vision that remains hidden within our consciousness?

A number of years ago, James Cathcart, a member of the Architecture Studio at Cran-brook, constructed a device similar to the modified glasses of Stratton. By wearing it, I was afforded a view of "vision without inversion," a view of a landscape where the ground floated upon an aqueous sky with trees rooting themselves into the blue, where masonry joints were drawn with a tensile suction, where pendants tethered ascending bulbs of light. Though my feet remained upon the ground, the structure of vision



Gaudi, *Parque Guell*

was temporarily reversed. What had normally conveyed itself as being in compression was now opened to the possibility of being in tension. The blocks of the masonry wall were still pulled to the earth which, however, was above, rather than below. The ground still attracted but the conveying forces were now in tension rather than compression.

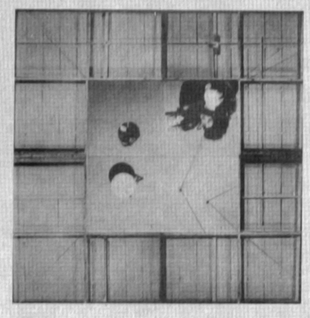
The memory of this walk through "vision without inversion" was revived recently upon a trip to Barcelona and the viaduct vaults of the Parque Guell. Underneath the vaults the stones float in a precise withdrawal from the earth. Gaudi understood the ascending grace hidden in gravity, the release from the heavy grave of the earth. The stones of the vaults are suspended between tension and compression, between ascent and descent; however, they have not been lifted into place but have fallen into place from above. Gaudi's obsession, his discovery, was that compression possesses its internal complement in tension, that the balance between the two could be found within the vertical axis. As Gaudi noted, this discovery pointed to a manner of building that departed from a "three thousand year history of architecture." What Gaudi is refer- ng to is the orthogonal resolu-tion of forces through the fulcrum and lever and its representation by the cross. Simone Weil represents the equation of gravity and grace in this classical manner; "The cross as a balance, as a lever. A going down, the condition of rising up. Heaven coming down to earth raises earth to heaven." The resolution of forces through the orthogonal equation is what Gaudi sought to question and, ultimately transcend. The trajec-tory of his work was accelerated by the understanding that gravity had its own vital opposition which was evidenced in the phe-nomena of living growth. It is here that I find the parallel to "vision without inversion," the palpable coursing of a force through a body in the inverted field.

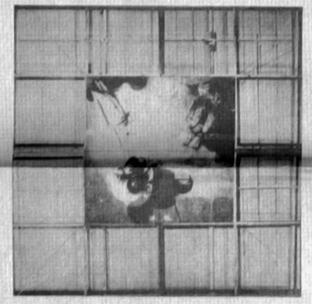
What has been released in this simple unravelling of the mechanics of vision? Just as a mirror short-circuits the encounter between the self and the other by revealing the subject-object axis to the self alone, the reversal lens makes evident the presence of the compressive force and its opposition in the lived body. Together, the two axes constitute a conscious, sentient being that is inevitably thrown back on to the organic relations between subject and space." The intervention of these simple devices creates a temporary rupture in the field of being that is compensated for by the "gyroscopic" stability of the lived body. By meditating upon the com-pensating acts and thoughts used in over-coming these ruptures we begin to gain a glimpse of the structure of our being and its relation to the world. To answer the question of what has been released in the unravelling of vision: it is understanding, a brief understanding of the condition of our ground, a ground that seeks to maintain its structure through experience.

The studies presented here are an attempt to inhabit the horizon of "vision without inversion," an attempt to literally reverse the compression-tension axis of the body. The direct application of this reversal becomes the condition for the work. Simply put, a con-struction is made whereby the ceiling and floor are reversed and inhabited by bodies in a number of postures. The logic of the inversion belies the physical difficulty of accomplishing this task. How is the body to be inverted? Where will the counter-weight be found? Does the body support itself in tension as it does in compression? The details of the work arise out of solutions to these specific questions, details that are imbued with the immediacy of the bodily risk of being suspended thirteen feet above the ground. This risk is always present in the work and can be understood in the context of the lack of risk or "distance" that charac-terizes our relationship to technology. For technology is a continuum of instrumental relations, each relation being the prediction and control of a particular phenomena or preceding relation so that a risk (bodily of otherwise) is minimized. The presence of technology pre-sumes the elimination of risk. The work here deliberately reintroduces primary questions of loading that must be solved in the construction. The "distance" involved here is literally measured and experienced by the construction and inhabitation of the work.

In contemporary architecture the instru-mental condition is evidenced by the simulated freedoms offered by the technology of diminished risks. In a formal way the expression of statically determined structures have been replaced with the simulation of a dynamic play of forces. It is evidently possible to simulate a dynamic condition, but ultimately this is done at a cost, for the static load has simply been displaced. What is in evidence in a cantilever is not the momentary vector of a dynamic force but the sign of the expenditure of energy (and technology) in supporting an inefficient static load. The excesses built into our economies are now read in the appearance of our buildings, an excess of deferred risks and distance.

The possibility being offered by this work is that we possess, within ourselves, the capacity to unhinge the simple weight of compression through a meditation upon the inverted static field. Within our vision lies the opportunity of a release from the imperative of gravity, an internal fulcrum around which the loads of compression may be opposed and reversed. Understood in this way the presence of a building could be considered as the sign of its very construction. In contemplating a masonry wall can we not ask ourselves the question of how the blocks were stacked. What countered the weight of block for the moment that it took to displace it from the surface of the earth? The presence of the building is a measure of the (invisible) tensile forces activated in its erection. To read the building is to read back to the circumstances of its erection, the tensioning acts that lifted the loads one upon the other. These acts form the human web of circumstance (and expenditure) that surrounds a building.



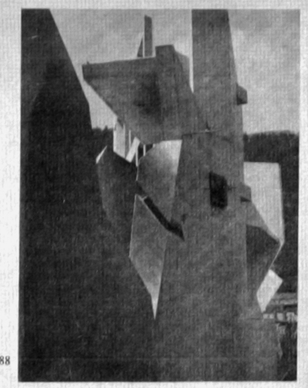


Dan Hoffman with Chris Bauer, Irit Mintz, Scott Neiswander, *Vision Without Inversion Construction*, 1990

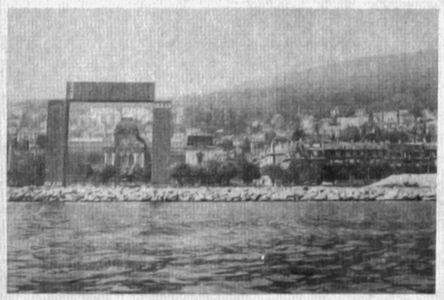
The work shown here does not presume a building but is a simple implantation of vision along the vertical axis, the axis of con-structional loads. The axis of sight becomes superimposed with the axis of loads. This superimposition flattens the visual horizon and renders it as a field of force. When placed into this flattened and charged field, the body registers not only the proportional distance from the camera lens but also the effect of the forces placed upon it. The acceleration towards the horizon that is implicit in perspective becomes the acceleration due to gravity or its opposite, the acceleration of the ascending force. Here the two ordinates of architectural representation, plan and elevation, are com-bined into a single expression, a vertical plan that registers the possibility of its own extension into building.

Dan Hoffman, 1990

Yukinori Yanagi, *Ground Project-Wandering Position 2*



Günther Domenig, *Das Steinhaus*, 1988



Luc Deleu, *Triumphant Arch*, Neuchatel, 1983

## 10/12
### Discussion Program

**#53**
**Friday October 12, 6pm.**

**TOPIC:**
**HIGHER-ORDER DISCRIMINATION**
**MODERATOR: ADRIAN PIPER**

...As I have painted it, then, higher-order discrimination is peculiarly the sickness of thoughtful, well-intentioned and conscientious individuals who nevertheless have failed adequately to confront and work through their own prejudices, or who perhaps have been too quickly satisfied by their ability to marshall arguments on behalf of doing so. Such individuals are being neither disingenuous nor hypocritical when they deny that a person's race, gender, sexual orientation, or ethnic or religious affiliation affects their judgement of her competence or worth. They vehemently insist that this is so, they want it to be so, and they genuinely believe it is so . They are, nevertheless, mistaken. Their efforts to explain away each manifest expression of higher-order discrimination on different and inconsistent grounds are unconvincing. And their behavior exhibits a degree of otherwise inexplicable arbitrariness and idiosyncracy that severely strains our attempts to apply the principle of charity in making sense of it. Hence in order to understand the behavior of high-order discrimin-ators, we must watch what they *do*, not what they *say*.

--Adrian Piper, excerpted from "Higher-Order Discrimination" an essay to be included in the forthcoming *Identity, Character, and Morality*, Amelie O. Rorty and Owen Flanagan (MIT Press)

## Upcoming Exhibitions

**BENEFIT EXHIBITION & AUCTION**
November 27 - December 8, 1990
Auction: Saturday, December 8

**YUKINORI YANAGI**
December 18 - January 19, 1991
(Closed December 23 - January 2)

**LUC DELEU**
1991

**GÜNTHER DOMENIG**
1991

**EMPTY PEDESTALS PROJECT**
1991

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